Contents

Preface —— VII

Part I: **Prolegomena**

1 Introduction —— 3
- 1.1 Theoretical and methodological perspectives —— **13**
- 1.2 The terms Old Norse religion and Old Order —— **26**
- 1.3 Sources —— **33**
- 1.4 Outline and hypotheses —— **41**

2 Previous theories and research: A critical assessment —— 46
- 2.1 The theory of decay —— **47**
- 2.2 The theory of clash —— **52**
- 2.3 The theory of adaptation —— **56**
- 2.4 An alternative approach —— **59**

Part II: **The role of rulers as agents in the winding up of the native religion**

3 Rulers and conversions —— 63
- 3.1 Official conversion(s) and native rulers —— **63**
- 3.2 Why did the Scandinavian rulers change religion and adopt Christianity? —— **68**

4 The rulers' strategies for doing away with former religious practice and beliefs —— 75
- 4.1 The erasure of king's ritual role at pagan feasts —— **76**
- 4.2 The erasure of local cult leadership and the pagan cultic organization —— **93**
- 4.3 The material erasure of the old cult —— **121**
- 4.4 The elimination of pagan animal sacrifices and other traditional customs —— **152**
- 4.5 Redefining the status of the gods —— **170**

5 Replacements and displacements of pagan religion —— 184
- 5.1 The replacement of the pagan royal rites —— **184**
- 5.2 The Christian replacement of cult leadership —— **191**

5.3 The replacement of the old sanctuary — **194**
5.4 The replacement of pagan funeral rituals and eschatological beliefs — **205**
5.5 The replacement of pagan libation sacrifices — **217**
5.6 The displacements of animal sacrifices, worship of pagan gods and cult images — **220**

6 King Óláfr Tryggvason's missions – a contextual approach — 222
6.1 Violent religious change in Trøndelag — **223**
6.2 Non-violent transition in Iceland — **233**

7 Why pagan rituals and religious leadership? — 247

Part III: **Pagans fight back**

8 Blótsveinn and the pagan revolt in Svetjud — 259
8.1 The religio-political background of Blótsveinn — **259**
8.2 The historicity of Blótsveinn — **265**
8.3 Why did the pagans dethrone King Ingi and what did Blótsveinn represent? — **273**
8.4 Rebellions of pagans in late Viking Ages Svetjud — **276**
8.5 Defending the old order — **289**

9 Pagan defenders and rebellions against Christian kings in Trøndelag — 293
9.1 Snorri as a historian — **293**
9.2 The pagans' opposition against Hákon góði — **297**
9.3 Jarl Hákon and the sons of Eiríkr — **303**
9.4 Óláfr Tryggvason confrontations with the pagan farmers — **313**
9.5 Óláfr Haraldsson's encounter with the pagan Þrœndir — **316**

10 The resistance of pagans in Iceland — 321
10.1 The confrontation between Christian missionaries and the pagans — **322**
10.2 The pagan party at Alþingi 999/1000 — **329**

11 The resilience of pagans: A comparative perspective — 337
11.1 Similarities and differences — **337**
11.2 Why did the pagans' resistances finally collapse? — **339**
11.3 Religions of the status quo, resistance and revolution — **342**

Part IV: **Epilegomena**

12 The Demise of Old Norse Religion: A Synthesis — 351
12.1 A protracted process that took place at different times in different places — **351**
12.2 The early Christian kings — **354**
12.3 The pagans' resistance — **356**
12.4 The establishment of Christian kingdoms — **358**

Sources — 361

Bibliography — 369

Abbreviations — 403

Index — 405